

Hamilton Field, Frame Building Type D  
(Facility Nos. 609, 618, 651, 930,  
Airmen's and WAF Barracks and Dormitories)  
D Street at A Street, and C Street  
Novato  
Marin County  
California

HABS No. CA-2398-CR

HABS  
CAL  
21-NOVA,  
ICR-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD  
Frame Building Type D  
(Airmen's and WAF Barracks and Dormitories,  
Facility Nos. 609, 618, 651, 930)

HABS  
CAL  
21-NOVA,  
ICR-

HABS No. CA-2398-CR

**Location:** Hamilton Army Air Field  
Novato, Marin County, California  
Frame Building Type D  
Airmen's and WAF Barracks and Dormitories (Facility Nos. 609 [northeast corner of the intersection of D and A Street], 618 [northeast corner of the intersection of D and A Street], 651 [northeast corner of the intersection of D and A Street], and 930 [C Street north of Main Entrance Road])  
  
U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)  
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)  
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220; C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

**Significance:**

Buildings 609, 618, 651, and 930 are considered significant for their association with Air Force history in northern California, and with World War II actions in the Pacific Theater. Type D frame buildings constructed in this section of the base have even less architectural detail than those temporary barracks adjacent to the main base buildings, attesting to the urgent need for additional quarters on base during the first years of the war.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

**Description:**

The two-story frame barracks buildings are rectilinear in shape and measure approximately 30 by 80 feet. They have low-pitched composition shingle gable roofs with louvered vents in the gable ends and overhanging eaves. Metal ventilators are located on the ridgelines. Siding is horizontal wood board, covered with asbestos shingles. The foundations are concrete or post on concrete pier. The primary entrances, on each end of the buildings, are accessed via a concrete stoop and stairway with two-inch metal pipe railings or two-inch by four-inch wood rails. Double entrance doors on each end of the buildings are solid-core wood with four lights and three recessed panels; lock sets are standard metal with exterior Von Duprien thumbblatch locks, with interior round knobs and half-mortised hinges. Doors

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have metal panic bars on the interior. Windows are eight-over eight-light wood sash and are located on the first and second stories on each long side elevation. Exterior wood staircases provide access to second floors through solid-core wood doors with four lights over three recessed wood panels. Exterior fire ladders are located on both sides of each entry.

Originally the interior floor spaces of each building consisted of a large open barracks room on each floor. Some of the interior spaces have now been partitioned for use as offices. Ceilings originally were open to the peak with exposed six-inch-square roof trusses supported by braces. These were later covered with gypsum board or suspended acoustical tile. Original interior walls were covered with gypsum board; composition wood paneling has been installed over the original in some hallways and rooms, and acoustical tile over some ceilings. Subflooring for the barracks is tongue and groove wood with eight-inch-square vinyl asphalt tile covering. Doors are solid-core wood with either three or five recessed panels. Wooden stairways, with non-skid treads, provide access to the second stories. They have two-inch aluminum "Speed Rail" hand rails. Heating systems consist of forced air gas heaters; all ductwork is exposed. Original lighting fixtures are of the "schoolhouse" type, with a canopy and suspended milk glass bowl shade. Replacement lights are industrial type open end double tube fluorescent fixtures mounted flush with the ceiling or suspended on rods and chains.

Latrines are located on each floor. They have ceramic tile floors, with one-by-one-inch, one-by-two-inch, and two-by-two-inch tiles. Walls are clad in four-by-four-inch ceramic tile. Showers have four to six shower heads and tile walls and floor. A changing room with wood benches adjoins the shower area. Sinks are enameled cast iron wall-mounted, made by Standard; each has a mirror. There are four to six sinks in each barracks. Three Standard wall-mounted urinals and three to four Standard Sanitary Corp. Pacific toilets separated by wood stall partitions are located in each latrine. There are also floor-mounted cast iron mop sinks in each latrine. Lighting fixtures are recessed chrome and glass.

The barracks buildings were modernized in 1954 with the installation of bedroom partitions, a mahogany chair rail, asphalt tile base and flooring, tileboard wainscoting, and exterior asbestos shingle siding.

The barracks buildings are located on a flat site and an adjoining hill top. Concrete walkways surround the buildings and provide access to those on the hill. Historic plantings consist of poplar, acacia, and Osage orange trees, as well as pyracantha shrubs. According to informants, the rose bushes on WAF Hill were planted by members of the Women's Air Force when they occupied the barracks.

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**Historical Context:**

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HA8S No. CA-2398-F.

These buildings were all built in 1942 as the war effort began in the Pacific Theater. Initial use was as barracks to house airmen. By 1966 Facility 618 had been converted to academic classrooms and Facility 930 served as a Numbered Headquarters for the Air Force. Facility 609 and 651 remained in use as dormitories, but 651 had been divided into small rooms and was used by the Women's Air Force (WAF). Facility 930 was acquired by the U. S. Navy in 1974 when the base closed and was converted to use as a Credit Union; it is still in use today for this purpose. The remaining three buildings are vacant and dilapidated.

**Sources:**

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HA8S No. CA-2398) and Section 8 in report HA8S No. CA-2398-F.

See the following project Field Record work:

Facility No. 609, Barracks: roll 5, exposures 7-10; roll 52, exposures 3-4

Facility No. 618, Visiting Airmen's Dormitory: roll 4, exposures 1-2, 7-8; roll 5, exposures 3-4; roll 52, exposures 7-10; roll 5, exposures 3-4

Facility No. 651, Airmen's Dormitory: roll 6, exposures 3-4; roll 53, exposure 3-8

Facility No. 930, Barracks: roll 96, exposures 1-10

The line sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warshaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

**Project Information:**

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP

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and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

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Date prepared: July 1995

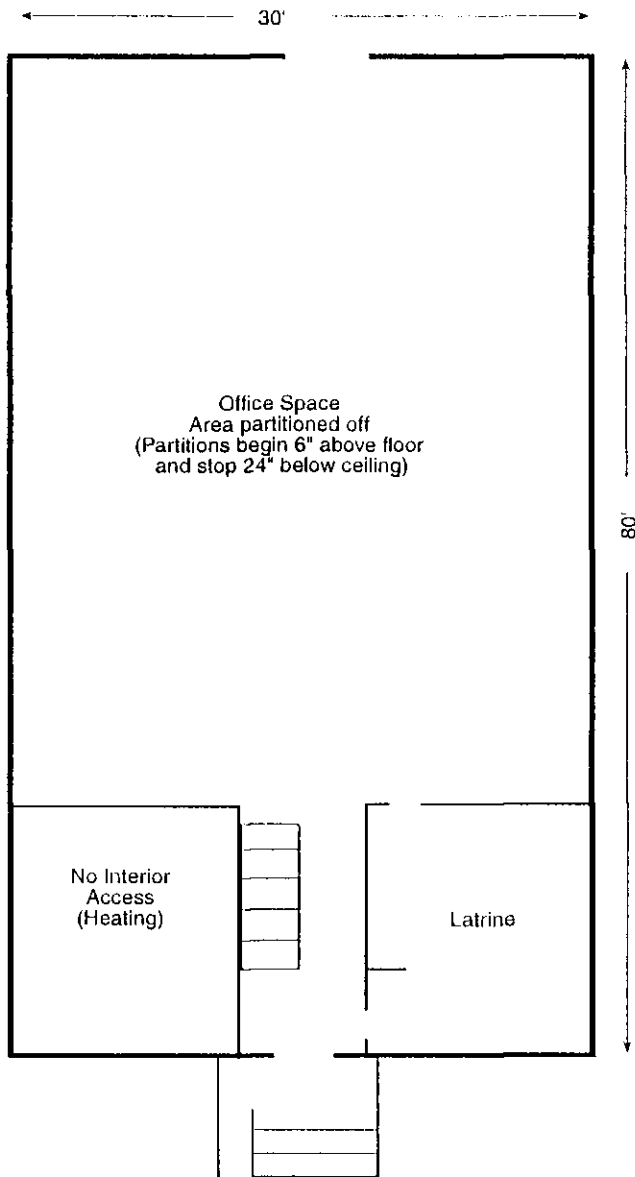
Photography prepared by: David De Vries

Affiliation: Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California

Date of photographs: May 1993



1st Floor



2nd Floor

